

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims so as to read as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A workpiece transport apparatus comprising:
 - at least one pair of transport stages, each transport stage of each said pair of transport stages being disposed in a horizontally opposing manner to the other transport stage of said pair of transport stages and including fluidic expulsion means or simultaneously operable fluidic expulsion means and fluidic suction means for lifting and transporting one or more workpieces in a floating fashion therebetween;
 - at least one plurality of elevator pins capable of being raised and lowered disposed on at least one transport stage of each of the at least one pair of transport stages such that when raised, said elevator pins are adapted to surround a periphery of at least one workpiece, and to retain the at least one workpiece in a floating fashion between said pair of opposing transport stages by allowing a tip portion of each of said raised elevator pins to contact contacting with or mate mating with the transport stage opposite to the transport stage from which said at least one plurality of elevator pins are raised; and
 - at least one rotating mechanism for rotating the transport stages of each of said at least one pair of transport stages so as to cause the individual transport stages of each of said pairs of transport stages to be inverted relative to one another;

whereby each of said at least one pair of transport stages may transfer at least one workpiece peripherally retained by at least one plurality of said elevator pins raised from a lower one of said pair of transport stages facing an upper one of said pair of transport stages onto the upper one of said pair of transport stages facing said lower transport stage by using the rotating mechanism associated with said pair of transport stages to invert said pair of transport stages in accompaniment with lowering the elevator pins retaining said at least one workpiece following said inversion of said pair of transport stages .

2. Canceled, without prejudice.

3. (Currently Amended) A workpiece transport apparatus according to
claim 1 or claim 2 wherein:

at least a portion of each respective elevator pin of
each plurality of elevator pins is at least
partially coated with a material having vibration-damping and/or
cushioning properties, each said material having vibration-
damping material and/or cushioning material having rubber,
resin, and/or gel-like silicone as a primary component.

4. Canceled, without prejudice.

5. (Currently Amended) A workpiece transport apparatus according to ~~any~~

~~one of claims~~ claim 1 or 4 wherein:

at least a portion of each of the at least one pair of

transport stages is supported so as to permit horizontal or

vertical movement.

6. Canceled, without prejudice.